

IN THE FIGURES:

Pursuant to *37 CFR §1.121(d)*, Applicants file with this Amendment, a Formal Drawing Transmittal Letter that describes a change to each of original Figs. 1 and 2 in this application. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's approval of the change.

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, and reconsideration of the Office Action dated February 17, 2004. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-16 remain pending in this application. Figures 1 and 2 have been amended to be designated as Prior Art. No changes have been made to the claims. As mentioned on the first page, a Notice of Appeal concurrently is filed.

Applicants note the Examiner's comment concerning the claim for priority in the present Application. In response, Applicants respectfully submit that the certified copy of the priority document from which this application claims the benefit was filed in parent U.S. Pat. Appln. No. 09/960,415.

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Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Michel et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,118) in view of Nejime et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,717,818). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claims 1 and 2 (from which claims 3-8 depend) are both drawn to a speech communication apparatus. According to each claim, the apparatus includes a voice speed conversion means provided between the voice output device and the signal input/output means. The recited voice speed conversion means is said to change the time scale of the voice signal of the called party which arrives through the telephone line, and the signal input/output means.

As conceded in the Office Action, Michel fails to teach each and every feature of independent claims 1 and 2. Specifically, Michel fails to teach or fairly suggest employing a voice speed conversion means as recited in each of claims 1 and 2. Applicants note that the DSP as show in Fig. 4 of Michel et al. serves for voice recognition and solid state voice storage, as discussed at col. 4, lines 1-10. As such, Michel does not disclose or suggest voice speed conversion processing.

In the Office Action, Nejime then is cited for teaching a speech speed conversion means. However, while Nejime teaches that a speech speed conversion means 2000 is inserted between

the handset 3001 and the telephone body 3000, Nejime fails to teach which part of the handset 3001 (i.e. a microphone or an earpiece) is connected to the speech speed conversion means. Thus, even when the teachings of the two cited patents are asserted as combined, one of skill in the art would not know where in Michel's invention to place the speech speed conversion means disclosed by Nejime. In other words, even if the teachings of the two patents are considered together, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been led to modifying the invention of Michel by employing the speech speed conversion means of Nejime (and thereby to arrive at the claimed invention).

In view of the above remarks, Applicants submit this rejection is overcome and request it be withdrawn.

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Claims 9-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Michel et al. in view of Nejime et al., and further in view of Begeja (U.S. Pat. No. 5,859,908).

Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Michel et al. in view of Nejime et al. and Begeja, and further in view of Dahlqvist (U.S. Pat. No. 4,727,566).

These two rejections are addressed together as similar issues apply to both. Moreover, Applicants respectfully traverse both rejections.

Independent claims 9 and 10 (from which claims 11-14 depend) and independent claims 15 and 16 also each concern a speech communication apparatus. By each such independent claim, the apparatus also is defined as including a voice speed conversion means. As explained above, the Office Action concedes that Michel fails to teach or fairly suggest employing a voice speed conversion means. Moreover, Nejime fails to teach which part of the handset 3001 (i.e. a microphone or an earpiece) is connected to the speech speed conversion means. Neither Begeja nor Dahlqvist remedies the deficiencies discussed above with respect to Michel and Nejime. Hence, in view of the above remarks, Applicants submit both of these rejections are also overcome and request they be withdrawn.

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Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment and the above remarks obviate the outstanding rejections in this case, thereby placing the application in condition for immediate allowance. Action in this regard earnestly is solicited.

If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, such as fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, please charge the fees to Deposit Account 02-4300; Order No. 033240.0091.

Respectfully submitted,

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